Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

Cultivate faith, not doubt. Give every man credit for the good he does, never seeking to attribute base motives to beautiful acts. We are all heroes in progress.

— Elbert Hubbard

olume XIV **JUNE 1963** Number 3

OUR PURPOSE

To promote the practice of prayer among ALL religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

CONTENTS

From Wealth to Greater Wealth *(poem)* ...	*Carla Parsuris*	1
Editorial: *The Essential Ingredient* ...		2
Messengers of God ...	*Harry Halsey Starrett*	5
A Saint of Africa: *Recollections of Dr. Schweitzer* ...	*Marion Mill Preminger*	6
A Debt We Owe to Poets ...	*John H. Armbruster*	10
Two Vignettes ...	*Velta Myrle Allen*	13
Pattern of Freedom ...	*Dr. S. Radhakrishnan*	14
Spiritual Maxims ...	*Genevieve Burnell*	16
Endurance in Spiritual Life ...	*Charles Cox*	18
The Holy Grail ...	*Mark Halpern*	20
Rapturous Moment ...	*Mildred Long*	24
Ideals and Struggle ...	*Carla Patsuris*	26
Decline of Religion ...	*G. N. M. Tyrrell*	27
Sowing and Reaping ...	*Zeoria G. Stirrett*	28
Lesson In Stone ...	*Zelma Dennis*	29
Why Far Away ...	*Anonymous*	30
Books That Never Grow Old ...	*Peter V. K. Funk*	32
Notices and Comments ...		34

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

22 East 29th Street New York 16, N.Y.

Volume XIV June, 1963 Number 3

FROM WEALTH TO GREATER WEALTH

A branch ascends with budlets bursting red,
Thus silently a thing occurs and when
We look for Spring there lingers June instead
(It is by no caprice that men are men.)
Bright-breasted robins find the summer lawn
As emerald grasses found the spring-time breeze
(Invisible advancement marches on,
Perfection's wealth arrives by slow degrees.)
We are mosaic of all we ever know,
Composite is the character, the soul,
(Like those whom we admire we tend to grow
And by familiar path-ways reach a goal.)
All things we see and hear, then say and do,
Transfuse to consummate the commonplace;
And our reflections, now, are changing too...
(Today the image of tomorrow's Grace.)

— Carla Patsuris

EDITORIAL

THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT

> In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God: in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses...as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. (—II Corinthians 6:4-10)

Struggling and tossed in the toils of spiritual endeavor, the God-seeker often looks with envy on those who seem to suffer no such anguish and yet are visibly defenders of ethics and moral living. They incorporate into their design of life the assumption that God exists, that life is for the serious, that divine saviours are not born into the humiliations of a body unless there is some great, pressing, overriding need for it, that evil stings and scourges and destroys, that goodness is a reality, that prophets lived and spoke, saw God in a flame, and in the secret of mountain contemplations heard his voice. There are individuals who believe these things and testify to their truth—and yet do not seem to suffer from the press and challenge and inexorable burdens of spiritual striving.

The aspirant, the seeker of God, often searches his heart in comparison with these unanguished men and wonders if such trial and torment as he knows is necessary, if he is not perhaps weaker than he need be, weaker than these other men, upon whom he looks with envy and wonder, and with rivalry. For they are not men who would ally themselves with evil, nor support wickedness; they are men who live ethical, controlled, responsible lives, rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's and, to all appearances, unto God what is His. And yet they do not bleed, they do not lose the way or want to lose the way, or cry out in despair or know the terrible sense of loneliness, of isolation, that only the seekers of God experience.

They do not seem egoists, do not appear to suffer the harshness and searing heat of the ego in any of its ancient guises—anger, greed, lust, jealousy, perversity. They seem to escape the devastating conflicts of mind and soul which we go through, and not once but many times; they do not resemble prisoners in any way—as we are ourselves, prisoners of God, slaves of Him, under his control, with no resources nor hope whatever except his grace when He chooses to breathe it out

upon us. They are men who are masters of their little worlds, able and skilled and esteemed by their fellows, sought after, dowered with honors and prizes, consulted, pointed out, warmed by success. When we compare ourselves to them, we suffer grievously and can only wonder how much we have deluded ourselves into believing that we know anything about life or the ways of God or the nature of men, that in comparison to them we know little and are not even sure of the little that we do know. We wonder if we are the only real egoists, the only ones who know the dreadful power and mortifying resources of the egos we carry with us, the living beasts, through every waking hour.

What we forget is that these men have not yet awakened to the life of the spirit, have not yet hungered for experience and knowledge of that Presence which we, depending upon it for survival, have known so intimately; have not yet launched themselves upon that lonely sea over which they must pass to reach the shores of light and discover *That,* by knowing which all things may be known; have not yet acknowledged that such an all-enlightening, all-sustaining reality may exist or, if existent, that it may be sought at all, and approached, and contacted, and glimpsed, then known and embraced and assimilated into one's innermost substance for all time, beyond all loss hereafter. *They have not done this, known this, or yearned for this.*

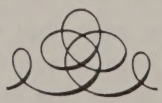
They are still living under the sovereignty of the worldly mind. They still believe the world is as real as it seems, and its honors and titles and prizes real also, *as real as they want them to be.* They still know rivalries, feed them, anticipate them. They are hedged and enclosed by the demands of the worldly nature, though to others unable to examine them intuitively, they seem free agents. They are still at the level of ethical living, which for people like themselves is a comfortable, complacent manner of life that gives them the illusion of being dedicated but is, in reality, far removed from the anguish and pressure which the children of light, before the light breaks, must suffer and endure. Between the highest ethics and the lowliest sincere spirituality there is a gulf as wide as the world, for in the one case the individual believes he is the master of his life, while in the other he knows he is not.

Most of all, these men *have not yet attempted to destroy the ego in themselves.* Never having made this effort, towards which their entire spiritual evolution has been directed, they do not yet know the extent and potency of the dark power that is coiled within them, buried con-

veniently deep for them to enjoy, somewhat longer, a life without marked eruptions of selfishness and vainglory.

When we first try to live an egoless life we stimulate the sleeping energies of the ego within us and then for the first time begin to understand why great mystics and saints have identified the ego with Satan and with evil itself—for evil *is* the ego. In trying to overcome egoism we attempt to overcome nature, to turn the normal currents of our nature in another direction, and we must do this persistently. In the process we fight with the ego itself, which battles for its life and often overwhelms us along the way. It is as if there are vast and mysterious forces in the universe, of both good and evil, which seem to ignore the lives of individuals *who have not yet begun to live significantly*, who cling to the toys and tinsel of worldly excitement, fleshly living, and intellectual achievement, but which converge upon the soul awakened to its high destiny, the soul of the individual who sets his aim on the Divine Mystery itself and struggles to partake of that divinity, will be content with nothing less, even in this life. The newest participant in this course is wiser and greater than he, whatever his success, who has never tried to eradicate his ego and imagines that even for an instant his life is separate from the life of God.

Let us then as soon as possible cease envying those who move in a different sphere from us, who live unto themselves, beneath a moral veneer, whose strength is their own and therefore in the end no strength at all. If we remain in the presence of Him whom we seek, whose bondsmen we are, and whose grace is our zone of safety and our power, it will not occur to us to chafe at our bonds or look with narrowing eyes on those who, because of insignificant aspirations and harmless vision, enjoy a temporary immunity from the deadlier snares of evil, as we have known them. Let us make ourselves obsessed with the need to remain close to our mysterious Master and then, far from envying, or wishing ourselves different, we shall become instructors in living for those who once seemed so far beyond us in their mastery of the arts of worldliness. We shall teach those we once envied the science of living and by our passion for self-effacement will enkindle in hearts oppressed with transient glories a desire to resemble us in the peace we have won, by our long wooing and faithful vigils, from our Merciful Companion.

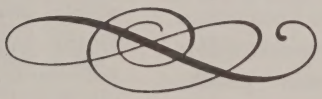


MESSENGERS OF GOD

AS A TREE IS KNOWN by its fruit, a messenger is known by his message. Down through the centuries, many messengers have appeared in the world, bearing messages for the enlightenment and spiritual advancement of the individual and for the uplift and betterment of the whole human race. When their divinely ordained mission has been fulfilled, they passed on, but their messages live on forever. For they are words of wisdom, eternal verities—the Words of God.

Verily, man is the channel, not the Source.
There are many channels but only one Source.
There are many messengers but only one Message.
There are many paths but only one Goal.
THERE ARE MANY RELIGIONS but only one God.

— Harry Halsey Starrett



THOUGHTS FOR TODAY...

If hate has made your heart as barren as the desert and you want to see it bloom with love, resist not and let the waters of true love flow in.

Truth is a tree and love is the fruit. Those that share the fruit have plenty and those that keep it have none.

THE WORLD is but dust. It is the spirit within that lives.

— Virgil L. McComb

Reverence For Life

A SAINT OF AFRICA:

Recollections of Dr. Schweitzer

Marion Mill Preminger

THOSE WHO HAVE had the privilege of be ing near to Dr. Albert Schweitzer at his hospital at Lambarene, Gabon, French Equatorial Africa, are often asked, why this simple country doctor with a primitive and small hospital should be increasingly centering the attention of the world on his activities.

It is true that he has a most remarkable personality—strong enough to radiate practically all over the world. But this is not the sole cause. The word personality means different things to different people. When a personality has force without balance we recognize the fanatic; when it has originality without breadth, the eccentric. Yet even when we have said that Dr. Schweitzer combines force, balance, originality and breadth, we have only begun to give an impression of this most unusual character.

At six o'clock in the morning he gets up for work like any other worker. Everybody starts to talk to him, at the same time, in an avalanche of native dialects, of which he understands as little as they understand the languages he speaks: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German and French. But this does not matter here. Everybody understands him, and he understands everybody—as he only speaks one language: the language of the heart.

THE VIBRATION of his person in crumpled working clothes, in a sun helmet as old as the house he lives in, is the vibration one receives in a church.

In all the weeks I spent practically constantly in his presence, I saw him only once displeased—when I brushed from his shirt a big flying ant, whose bite I know is poisonous. "But you have broken his leg!" cried Dr. Schweitzer with grave indignation, "and you had no right to do so! It was my ant, and I am sure it wouldn't have done me any harm. At any rate, human beings are much too clumsy to touch an ant or fly. Under a microscope you would see how you crippled him!"—Dr. Schweitzer over the years has acquired an extraordinary dexterity in catching the jungle's beetles and insects in a glass and restoring them to the open air. He has a miraculous way with animals.

Every native knows that each small animal, wild or tame, that is found about the hospital or in the jungle has to be brought to the Doctor who will feed it with a bottle

and care for it tenderly, and in some cases he even lets them sleep in his own room.

YOU CAN SEE a little wild boar going up the staircase every night to Dr. Schweitzer's room—the most untameable of all animals, waiting for the Doctor to come to arrange his pillow of old coffee sacks. Like a human being, the little boar does not sometimes like the set of his pillow. When this happens, it will get up again, which is the signal for the Doctor to patiently bend down and rearrange the sacks until his ward is satisfied and falls asleep. You can also see a baby antelope walk up those same stairs, night after night, and lie at the foot of the Doctor's bed, side by side with his dog. And even a pelican flies home every night, like a homing pigeon, and waits before the door for the Doctor to give it dinner. The pelican then opens its wings and starts noisily telling the Doctor where it has been the whole day long and what it has done. It is remarkable to see this pelican come home every night and go to sleep in the Doctor's quarters. Every morning when the Doctor opens his quarters the pelican flies out, like one going to business, and as surely as the sunset comes, it comes back in the evening, converses noisily with the Doctor and goes to sleep.

Walking into the jungle, Dr. Schweitzer is often heard saying to a visitor: "Be very careful not to step on the small serpents, they are easily harmed." His companion usually registers a look of utter amazement.

ONE EVENING when I was with the Doctor after dinner, while he was working on his manuscripts, he sat at his desk for several hours, writing on little scraps of paper, so as not to move his left arm upon which his little cat was snoring happily. This was in the dark night, by the light of one little oil lamp, but the radiance which goes out from him, the light which remains long after one has left him is blinding, unforgettable.

His compassion is limitless. If someone talks badly about another, which is strictly forbidden in his presence, and if people lie, he comments: "They exaggerate, as they have a surplus of personality."

I saw him one day when he heard that one of the lepers of his colony whom he had raised from youth, nourished, treated and clothed for twenty years, had stolen something from him. Others caught the leper and brought him trembling before the Doctor. Dr. Schweitzer looked at him. After a long pause he said very quietly: "The Doctor is very sad, my son—very, very sad. Not angry—just sad." This affected the leper far more deeply and lastingly than any whipping or other severe punishment he might have received from someone else.

The Doctor, nevertheless, has difficulty in administering the strictest justice.

ONE NIGHT a small riot broke out in the Lepers' Compound. The patients (who are frequently accompanied by a large family) came from two tribes which had long carried on war among themselves. No one was killed, but some were severely wounded. It was the Doctor's duty, the next day, to sit in judgment over the offenders. "During the hearing," he wrote a friend, "it came to light that the altercation had broken out without either of the parties truly wishing it. It was like the situation at the beginning of most wars: the tinder had collected itself in large amounts, and suddenly the flame burst forth. These people had merely done what I would almost have done myself, and instead of punishing them I gave them a mild rebuke and bound them over to reasonableness."

He is eighty-six years of age, yet I never saw him sit down in the presence of other people working. He shares in every form of manual labor done at the hospital. He allows no deference to be shown him by his fellow workers. Innumerable times he gets up at night to talk with his patients.

He is extremely thoughtful, insisting that the birthday of each coworker at the hospital be celebrated. He is universally respected, but not feared. One dares to tell him everything. He receives thousands of letters, and while it would be humanly impossible to find time to answer them all, he insists on having those that ask for advice and help read to him.

Dr. Schweitzer's intense humility is clearly reflected in his attitude towards his possessions and his personal attire. He has cut his own hair since he came to Africa forty years ago. He shaves himself without soap and with cold water. When he goes to Europe he wears the same pastor's clothes he wore when he arrived in the Gabon. His shoes are twenty years old. In his pocket he carries a little ready-made tie, which he puts on for special occasions such as funerals or christenings.

THIS GREAT MAN is a giant of tolerance, always appreciating one for what he is, holding purity of heart in much higher regard than accomplishments of the intellect. With Dr. Schweitzer one can only repeat his own words in praise of Goethe: "With him thought and conduct were one, and that is the best one can say of any thinker."

When one leaves Dr. Schweitzer and makes the difficult transition to everyday life (and this is true even with the great people who have been with him) I had the feeling that the light had gone out of my

life. When he said to me as I was leaving, "Look back to see how beautiful the island is, and how comfortably my hospital nestles there," I turned back and with amazement I noticed all of it for the first time: the beauty of the island, the beautiful palm trees, the incomparable sunset, on the most romantic of all African rivers, the Ogowe. I noticed it all for the first time because all of it had been blotted out by the light which radiated from Dr. Schweitzer, transmitting the most unforgettable qualities of his soul, of his great heart, his patience, his tolerance, his kindness and his humility.

IT WAS GIVEN to Dr. Schweitzer to make the remarkable phrase which called the whole world to thought: *reverence for life.*

It is so simple that a child can understand it, and so profound that the wisest men must meditate upon it. It is moving about the world, from mind to mind, like an oceanic current of the spirit. It reappears in the speeches of statesmen, and mothers are repeating it to their children in the home. Dr. Schweitzer has found the phrase that carries our thinking to a new level.

BUT HE HAS not only fashioned a phrase. He lives it. He sacrifices to it his various and prodigious gifts. All life and all lives command our reverence, but Dr. Schweitzer chose to serve those who have apparently least to give to the total community: the childlike savages. Beware, he says to us, of making too great a distinction between the cultivated and the illiterate, the wise and the foolish, the honored and the abandoned. If we ignore the humble and the ignorant we will soon cease to be wise and effective. Humanity will survive and advance only by acknowledging that its justification, its promise and its hope is present in every living thing.

(Condensed from FAITH TODAY)

WHEREVER THERE IS LOST the consciousness that every man is an object of concern for us just because he is a man, civilization and morals are shaken, and the advance to fully developed inhumanity is only a question of time.

— Albert Schweitzer

A DEBT WE OWE TO POETS

John H. Armbruster

FOR A LONG TIME I have been conscious of what we owe to poets who have said with such beauty the words of wisdom which we hear and profit from.

These poets have studied the emotions of men, the craving for spiritual understanding and a philosophy of life that will sustain them under difficult situations.

All of us have to cling to something that will assuage our fears, that will strengthen our convictions, that will give us hope and courage during dark days and I marvel at the way these poets have caught the vision that we need at just such times.

DURING THE Great Depression, when all that we had built up seemed to be toppling down, the words of Samuel Longfellow, which I had read many times before in the midst of prosperity when they didn't mean so much to me, came back to memory and I repeated them over and over to acquire courage.

He wrote:

I look to Thee in every need
And never look in vain
I feel Thy touch, Eternal Love
And all is well again
The thought of Thee is mightier far
Than sin and pain and sorrow are.

Discouraged by the work of life
Disheartened by its load
Shamed by its failures and its fears
I sink beside the road
But let me only think of Thee
And then new heart springs up in me.

Embosomed deep in Thy dear love
Held in Thy law I stand
Thy hand in all things I behold
And all things in Thy hand
Thou leadest me by unsought ways
Thou turnst my mourning into praise.

Trying to earn enough to support my family was no easy job during that period, but I derived a lot of encouragement each day when I repeated the words of the poet, Josiah Conder:

Day by day the manna fell
Oh to learn this lesson well
Still by constant mercy fed
Thou dost give us Lord our daily bread

Day by day the promise reads
Daily strength for daily needs
Cast foreboding fears away
Take the manna of today

Lord my times are in Thy hand
All my sanguine hopes have planned
To Thy wisdom I resign
And would mold my will to Thine

Thou my daily task shall give

Day by day to Thee I live
So shall added years fulfill
Not my own but my Father's will.

AND DURING THESE TIMES I recalled the beautiful words of John Greenleaf Whittier:

Dear Lord and Father of us all
Forgive our foolish ways
Reclothe us in our rightful minds
In purer lives Thy service find
In deeper reverence, praise.

Drop Thy still dews of quietness
Till all our strivings cease
Take from our hearts the strain and stress
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.

It was at this time, too, that another writer, though in words written in prose rather than poetry, inspired me to keep looking for good. Ina K. Pitner wrote:

"Expectancy of good in the minutiae of daily life is important in the demonstration of harmonious adjustment amid changing conditions.

"It helps to establish a scientific viewpoint and is protective and inspirational. Such expectancy opens our thought to progress. It is a virtual acknowledgment that countless opportunities for doing and enjoying good are awaiting us.

"Let us keep the door of thought wide open. Let us maintain the spirit of expectancy of good in all our readjustments and watch its guiding effect on the solution of human problems."

I repeated this over and over and referred to it constantly and did "watch its guiding effect on the solution of human problems" and found it was true.

ONE OPPORTUNITY after another unfolded and more and more good has come into my experience as it will in yours if you "maintain the spirit of expectancy of good" as the writer admonishes us.

With all these words of wisdom, both in poetry and prose, life has been interesting and rewarding.

So much is owed to these writers who have captured and retained for us the essence of those truths that prove to be "a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night" to lead us on into paths of peace.

PERHAPS IT CAN ALL be summed up in the words of John M. Neal:

Holy Father, Thou has taught us
We should live to Thee alone
Year by year Thy hand hath brought us
On through dangers oft unknown

When we wandered Thou has found us
When we doubted, sent us light
Still Thine arm has been around us
All our paths were in Thy sight.

We would trust in Thy protecting
Wholly rest upon Thine arm
Follow wholly Thy directing
Thou our only guard from harm

Keep us from our own undoing
Help us turn to Thee when tried
Still our strength in Thee renewing
Keep us ever at Thy side.

IF WE HAD NEVER BEFORE looked upon the earth, but suddenly came to it man or woman grown, set down in the midst of a summer mead, would it not seem to us a radiant vision? The hues, the shapes, the song and life of birds, above all the sunlight, the breath of heaven, resting on it; the mind would be filled with its glory, unable to grasp it, hardly believing that such things could be mere matter and no more. Like a dream of some spirit-land it would appear, scarce fit to be touched lest it should fall to pieces, too beautiful to be long watched lest it should fade away.

SO IT SEEMED TO ME as a boy, sweet and new like this each morning; and even now, after the years have passed, and the lines they have worn in the forehead, the summer mead shines as bright and fresh as when my foot first touched the grass.

— Richard Jefferies

TWO VIGNETTES

Velta Myrle Allen

THE UPPER ROOM

On the second floor of a house I once lived in was a little room of redwood paneling with beamed ceiling, resembling a chapel. A single window facing the west provided an excellent view of San Francisco on a clear day, and at night a fantastic setting of twinkling lights with the great Bay Bridge in the background. This little room was quiet, away from all noises, and the feeling of introspection and inspiration that it induced gave it the name of the Upper Room. Off to one side was a large closet, or dressing-room. This I called the Secret Place of the Most High, for here I came often, even in the middle of the night, sat comfortably in my chair, and waited for the still, small voice.

IT WAS HERE THAT I profited by what I had learned earlier in my life, and that is that we must enter into the Presence before the Presence can enter into us. This was many years ago and since that time I have not always had an Upper Room to go to, but the experience convinced me that even in the noisiest and most confusing situation we can ENTER INTO THE UPPER ROOM OF THE SOUL.

MY CUP RUNNETH OVER

It seemed a million birds awakened me at dawn and were having a jubilee outside my window. Only half awake, I listened. Then I moved closer to the open window and felt the soft pillow under my head, the fresh clean sheets, and how good it was to be able to lie in bed comfortably, without pain. The morning sun slowly sent golden shafts through the venetian blinds, playing shadows on the walls.

I AROSE AND BREATHED the cool fresh air. My day had begun. It was full of excitement and expectancy for everything good and the very thought of it made me want to shout, "This is going to be a great day!"

I breathed a prayer of gratitude for the wonderful world...for all people everywhere...and it filled me with such a great power I truly felt MY CUP RUNNETH OVER!

THE PATTERN OF FREEDOM

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

THE WAY to the knowledge of God is through self-surrender. It is not ceremonial piety; it is something inward in the soul. Those who, in the humility of a perfect self-surrender, have ceased to cling to their own petty egoes are taken over by the super-human Reality, in the wonder of an indescribable love. The soul rapt in the vision and possession of a great loveliness grows to its likeness.

Man is a child of God. He is mortal when he indentifies himself with the perishable world and body. He can become immortal through union with God; until then he wanders in darkness of the world. He is like a spark from the fire or a wave of the ocean. The individual comes forth from God, is always in Him as a partial expression of His will and at last when he becomes perfect, manifests God's will perfectly.

WE HAVE TO TREAD the path which saints have trodden to direct union with the Divine. We have to tread the interior way, to pass through crises, through dark nights and ordeals of patience. Nanak says: 'Yoga is not the smearing of ashes, is not the earrings and shaven beard, not the blowing of conchs but it is remaining unspotted amidst impurity.'

Nanak was critical of the formalism of both the Hindus and the Muslims. He went to baths in the Ganges as is usual with devout Hindus. When the Hindus threw water towards the rising sun as an offering to their dead ancestors, Nanak threw water in the opposite direction. When questioned he said: 'I am watering my fields in the Punjab. If you can throw water to the dead in heaven, it should be easier to send it to a place on earth.' On another occasion, he fell asleep with his feet towards Mecca. An outraged Mulla drew his attention to it. Nanak answered: 'If you think I show disrespect by having my feet towards the house of God, turn them in some other direction where God does not dwell.' Nanak says: 'To worship an image, to make a pilgrimage to a shrine, to remain in a desert, and yet have the mind impure is all in vain; to be saved, worship only the Truth.' Nanak tells us: 'Keep no feeling of enmity for anyone. God is contained in every bosom. Forgiveness is love at its highest power.' Nanak says: 'Where there is forgiveness there is God Himself.'

When asked about ahimsa (or non-violence), Nanak replied:

(1) Do not wish evil for any one. This is ahimsa of thought.

(2) Do not speak harshly of anyone. This is ahimsa of speech.

(3) Do not obstruct anyone's work. This is him.

(4) If a man speaks ill of you, forgive him.

(5) Practise physical, mental and spiritual endurance.

(6) Help the suffering even at the cost of your life.

BELIEF IN A SEPARATE self and its sufficiency is the original sin. Self-naughting is the teaching of the seers of all religions. Jesus says: 'If any man would follow me, let him deny himself.' Meister Eckhart declared that the Kingdom of God is for none but the thoroughly dead. We should aim to escape from the prison of our selfhood and not to escape from the body which is the temple of God. Until we reach the end we will have other lives to pass through. No failure is final. An eventual awakening for all is certain.

Nanak and his followers believe in the doctrine of karma and rebirth. We are born with different temperaments. Some are greedy and possessive, others fruitful and passionate. We come into the world bearing the impress of our past karma. Circumstances may stimulate these qualities. We may by our effort weaken the evil dispositions and strengthen the good ones. True happiness cannot be found in perishable things. It is found only in union with the Supreme. We are caught in the world of change, in the wheel of births and deaths because we identify ourselves with the physical organism and the environment. We can be freed by union with God attained through devotion. We must accept God as the guiding principle of our life. It is not necessary to renounce the world and become an ascetic. God is everywhere—in the field and the factory as in the cell and the monastary.

THE AIM OF liberation is not to escape from the world of space and time but to be enlightened, whereever we may be. *It is to live in this world knowing that it is divinely informed.* To experience a timeless reality we need not run away from the world. For those who are no longer bound to the wheel of becoming, life on earth is centered in the bliss of eternity. Their life is joy and where joy is, there is creation. They have no other country here below except the world itself. They owe their loyalty and love in the whole of humanity. God is universal. He is not the God of this race or that nation, but is the God of all human beings. They are all equal in his sight and can approach Him directly. We must, therefore, have regard for other peoples and other religions.

– Bhavans' Journal

(From THE INDIAN MESSENGER)

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS

Genevieve Burnell

The whole action of Divine Providence is not open to one view. There is much present to view and much left to faith. But the links of this golden chain are never lost to the heart that communes with God in prayer.

Innocence is a humility bearing spiritual fruit, for it is maintained in the perfect balance between knowledge of God's infinite Being and one's own nothingness. Our prayers are for the self-conscious balance which overcomes the world.

It is wonderful to remember that one of the greatest answers to prayer is the power to pray more...It is God in us who prays and remembers Himself, so how can any prayer fail?

By spiritual action we cease to build on what has been and become a new creature in God...Greatness is in renewing ourselves on the very things we undergo.

It seems as though in many cases we are only made aware of our weaknesses that we may better recognize the spiritual strength we receive from God.

By prayer we place ourselves in the presence of God, not so much to remind Him of our needs, as to remind ourselves of our need and dependence on Him. The real action of Prayer is to let our full attention rest on God's goodness and mercy and wisdom rather than on our asperities.

We think we pray for this or that, but actually we are praying for God, for there is no reality of good without God. We pray for health, or wisdom, or guidance, but these are merely the form we seek to see Reality and goodness in.

All things but God are good by participation, and He is the good in which all our good participates. As Mother Julian says, "God is good and is in all things, and the good that is in all things, it is He."

The effectuality of prayer is that it enforces its own end. Power is on the side of prayer because what we pray for is actually true now.

Problems in life are due to the sense of separation from truth,

absence of faith in God, and lack of the sense of nothingness regarding everything that is not truth.

Nothing can by any means hurt those who are under the auspices of truth. One may not actually escape all trouble, but the perception of truth gives exemption from harm from the troubles. We may go through things but in such a way that the things themselves are healed.

God made us to His image and likeness. We cannot improve on this generation of Himself in us, but our prayers can let the Eternal Self shine through into the world of time.

Our personal approach to God must ever be the intuition of our own being. It is this being that participates in Being itself.

Under the action of prayer we no longer cooperate with experience but cooperate with God.

The still mind is the mirror of heaven and earth, therefore keeping the mental mirror polished with rationality is of paramount importance.

Obedience is the great secret by which we receive the action of reality in our lives.

We may seem to alternate in our lives between trial and consolation, but God speaks to us in each. Trial shows us our need of Him, and consolation the bounty of His Love ever proceeding to us. The secret is to keep our eyes on Him rather than on the alternating conditions.

Under the benediction of prayers, each shall have a personal approach to God through the intuition of his own being. And with each his being will participate in Being Itself.

We do more by contemplating the truth regarding a person than we do by fixing our eyes on his problems. This self with problems is only a shadow cast by ignorance stopping the light of truth.

Prayers must awaken us to our true self because this real self is what is true about us. Awakening into the reality of our being must come as easily as opening our eyes on the dawn of a new day when the sun is shining and revealing what ought to be, now is.

ENDURANCE IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

Charles Cox

..LITTLE DO WE KNOW when we enter this spiritual arena, the gamut we will run. We can, indeed, use the patterns of heroes to sustain us and set the example for us. What a life of contradictions! By ourselves we are nothing, and at the same time we are all. Within a short space of days, wherever we are, we can see and feel for ourselves the loneliness of a desert existence, wherein the Self actually experiences the chill of the nights, of arctic duration, it seems broken uncomfortably by the confusion of the excessively burning warmth of the days. Total abandonment seems to drain and chill the spirit. Days at best are gray, the joy of discovery has waned. Truly as one lost in a desert in a strange land, motivation comes only from a feeling of dogged urgency to plod along to freedom. The spirit sometimes receives neither food nor moisture, yet drives ahead, of necessity it seems, lest inertia mean death. These days I have known lately.

STRANGELY, for me, my thoughts turned to half understood, half heard, and never appreciated words from the Bible: "Then Jesus went into the desert to pray." I had always imagined this to be a period of exalted communication, permeated *only* with the joy which should and does accompany such experiences. Could any human being go into this so real desert without his constant companion, the Ego? His is the shadow which stands perpetually in the way—blotting out the sun, the warmth, the goal which we earnestly strive to reach.

What is the true purpose of these desperate times in the life of the spiritual aspirant? How then to describe the climate of the soul? What country does it inhabit? Which is the vein, and which the artery, that regulates the stream of life? I AM that stream, so I cannot tell, merely move as inwardly directed, pulsating forward with instinctive urgency....There are times when we wish we could abandon this path, but realize the impossibility of such a thought—since the spirit once quickened, must always press on. The gift once accepted, can never be returned.

WE LEARN BY ENDURANCE, through such trying times, that faithful practice of meditation reaffirms our belief in the mercy and grace of God, until the parched soul receives the deluge that restores to it the bursting fulness of release into the main current of life.

Once we are serious in our spiritual endeavors, we live the truths of the scriptures. So many things become clear to us from personal experience. "Change yourself, and you change the world." We find that this is literally true. Once we embrace this life, we experience the real significance of the life-and-death struggle for a soul, as the deep subconscious becomes aware of what is going on. Then begins the vicious war, as the Ego tries to hold its own, asserting its strength against that of the growing development of a true self struggling for realization.

SO IT IS AT SUCH TIMES that we become aware of the frantic cries within: "Nonsense—this is a fantasy—live—don't waste your life on delusions." Spasms of conflict cause a nausea of the spirit, in a desperate effort to abort the new life growing within. In retrospect, we marvel that through it all, fortified only by our belief and the faithful practice of a way of life, laid out for us by those who have travelled before us, we weather the storm, outdistance Death, that unenlightened life that once seemed life itself.

ONLY THROUGH survival of such times do we find out what progress we have really made. In the bright fulness of the calm that must always ensue when the fury of the storm has spent its energies, do we stand sure once more that again we can see "the way" and have within ourselves whatever is needed to carry us to Realization, to Truth, to God.

(From a letter to FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER)

THE HOLY GRAIL

Mark Halpern

EVER SINCE MAN learned to think, he has been trying to solve the many abstract and abstruse problems of life. Throughout the centuries great sages and philosophers have been delving into the mysterious realms of individual and universal consciousness. They have probed into the profoundest depths of being and soared into the most transcendental domains of loftiest thought. Man has ever aspired to lift the arcane veil of the esoteric and occult. He has always hungered to behold, in full illumination, the Divine Light of Primal Causes behind his enigmatic and paradoxical existence on earth.

One of the greatest of life's mysteries that have challenged and intrigued the profoundest intellects of the ages is that of inscrutable, inexorable, and unpredictable Fate. None other of the eternal abstractions has been productive of so many questionings, so many whys and wherefores. When man sees many a good and gentle soul undergoing the severest of sorrows and tribulations, while, on the other hand, he often observes individuals of a selfish and ignoble nature enjoying a healthy life blessed with abundance and pleasure, he wonders and asks why it is. Wherever he looks he sees apparent unjustices. Fate, not Divine Love and Justice, seems to rule the world.

As man continues to witness how callously and indifferently Fate seemingly toys with the lives of human beings, he is tempted to yield in helpless resignation to its power, and say, like Omar Khayyam:

> "The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
> Moves on; nor all your piety nor Wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
> Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it."

A GREAT PORTION of mankind has given Fate supreme power over their lives. Thus these vast numbers live a sort of passive vegetating existence entirely devoid of self-reliance or courageous initiative. Yet there are others of the human family who refuse to admit that Fate is the only and sovereign lord of human affairs. These are the dauntless im-

mortals who have daringly envisioned their triumph over Fate in the Light of Life Everlasting. These are the mighty pioneers of man's higher evolution, the great adventurers of life who persist in their ascension to the dazzling heights of self-conquest, despite all obstacles, and in the face of poverty, sorrow, failure, and ignominy. For they have learned that they possess the invincible sword of the gods—the inviolate eternal freedom of their Spiritual Will.

In this mechanistic and technological twentieth-century civilization, the inner vision of man has become blurred by the prosaic dust raised in the grinding struggle for the mere bread of material existence. In the clamor and confusion of the noisy mart, in the distracting bedlam of social and political upheavals such as the world has never before experienced, he has become deaf to the eternal song of his soul.

But in vain does man try to smother the essential spiritual idealism of his intrinsic romantic nature. For he has been endowed with the divine faculty of the gods—the pure vision of creative imagination. In that sublime gift of his, is his invincible shield of protection against all soul-stifling ignoble materialistic forces and ideologies, which would reduce him to a mere robot-automaton, a mere mechanical cog in the man-made assembly-line world machine.

In the dust and heat of the modern battleground for economic survival, man has gradually forgotten his high heritage as a Divine Child of the Supreme Creator. He may even have forgotten that he once was fired with heroic aspiration to attain the dazzling heights of spiritual conquest for the good of the world. Buffetted on every side by the ruthless blows of circumstance, his most ambitious works thwarted and overthrown by many an ironic caprice of remorseless Fate, he often lapses into a lethargic resignation of dumb frustration.

IT IS NO WONDER THEN, that man lets the memories of his nobler and more gallant days recede into an engulfing oblivion; days when his heart flamed with spiritual zeal to help lead his fellow man out of the darkness of selfish barbarism into the light of peace and good will. Ah, could he but recall those brave days when he was constantly aware of his high destiny; when, mounted on his bold white charger, with burnished fiery sword scintillating at his side, his shining spotless armor flashing in the sun, he rode off on his Adventure Perilous for the protection of mankind's highest ideals and freedom.

Yet, let it not be said that the noble days of knight-errantry are dead and gone forever. Were it so, then indeed would humanity have reason to despair. True it is that no longer is there known to us a King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. No gallant Lancelot or Percival or Galahad is ever seen riding through our land on richly caparisoned mount, and with armor blazing a fiery challenge to all forces of evil and injustice.

But for those who have the eyes to see, whose spiritual sight has been opened, there are more gallant knights of the Round Table—of God's Round Table—than there have ever been before. No resplendent armor marks their identity. Ah, no. Often they are clad in the humble garments of poverty. Thousands roam the earth in obscurity, regarded by the world as failures and of no account. Reviled and rejected, ridiculed and abused, and always misunderstood, they yet follow the Eternal Star of Divine Guidance.

Many of these modern unknown knights of Highest Mystic Enterprise, are poets and musicians who have refused to compromise their artistic ideals for Mammon's tempting rewards of transitory fame and monetary success. They have kept the Fires of Selfless Consecration burning on the altar of their inner sanctuary. And rather than become an apostate to their sublime vision of the True, the Beautiful and the Good, thus betraying humanity's highest aspirations toward a truly Golden Era of Spiritual Culture, they would willingly give up their lives here on earth.

THESE ARE THE HEROIC Knights who have always guarded man's precious heritage of spiritual ideals. And it is these unknown valiant souls who are leading and will lead mankind into the Light of a New Day. Yet, they too are often the victims of Fate. Greater sorrows and sufferings are not experienced by any others of the human family. They know what it means to be betrayed, persecuted, and violently assaulted by their brothers of the race. But they never bow before Fate in helpless resignation to defeatism.

No! Regardless of the outer circumstances besetting them, they always stand erect, head held high, eyes fixed on their star of Divine Guidance. They keep ever moving upward and onward. They will never be stopped by Fate or any other power in the universe, until they have attained the Holy Grail of Life Everlasting, with which to quench the thirsting void of a confused and stumbling humanity lost in the wilderness of ma-

terialism. For they know that man's Spiritual Will is stronger than Fate.

It is of such as these that Lowell speaks, in his poem, "The Holy Grail":

"And Sir Launfal said, 'I behold in thee
An image of Him who died on the tree.
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns;
And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in thy hands, and feet and side.'"

THE MAN WHO HAS FOUND and roused his Spiritual Will, can never become the puppet of Fate. Though outwardly it may appear to others that his life is full of disaster and crumbling in ruins all about him, inwardly he is the master, serene in the inspiring realization of his Unconquerable Spirit. For his heroic heart keeps ever singing the triumphant song of the immortal soul of man, echoing the fiery words of the Spirit, which keep flaming through his being, saying:

"No power in the universe can block the persistent effort of a determined soul bent on uncompromising inner spiritual conquest, the only kind of conquest having any value of eternal significance"....

There is an inmost center in us all,
Where truth abides in fulness; and around,
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear perception—which is truth.
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Binds it, and makes all error; and to know
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.

— Robert Browning

RAPTUROUS MOMENT

Mildred Long

As I lay on my bed I had to devise many ways of combatting pain, discomfort, and discouragement. And practically all of them had to originate in my thinking.

A friend suggested I try to recapture some of the joy of my childhood. And thus began the search.

SUMMER DAYS in the mountains I loved the best. There I had a sense of freedom not experienced at home. But it seemed I could resurrect no special joy.

So I tried building joy and beauty by making rhymes and arranging words in rhythmic order. I sought for beautiful scenes like sunsets, for deep and compelling ideas to clothe in words. This helped me pass many hours that might otherwise have been barren and dreary.

THEN ONE DAY it happened. The whole scene came before me, a beauty spot hidden away in my heart.

I stood before the door of our rude mountain cabin. The morning sun warmed my face. The fresh breeze carried the fragrance of pine and fir. A panorama of God's handiwork spread before me. And my heart quivered a little with an indefinable emotion.

I was free! The whole world was before me. Breakfast dishes were washed and the beds made. There was nothing more to do till lunch time. Adventure beckoned me and my heart responded.

I looked again at the scene before me and drank in its beauty. Between me and the road lay acres of growing grain, sparkling green in the morning sun. The hills beyond presented a crazy patchwork of varying shades of green, brown, and tan. The sky was crystal clear and blue as the cornflowers that I remembered seeing the year before. I loved the pine, fir, blue spruce, cedars, with their varying shades of green.

DEEPLY BREATHING the vital air I ran down the gentle slope off on my adventure. Wild flowers were just beginning to bloom, so I slowed my pace and looked to find the ones I knew by name. Here was the Indian paintbrush, the blue bell, and there a primrose. Would I find a mariposa lily or a columbine?

My wanderings took me at last to a small clump of trees. Here in the shade the ground was damp as if it might be fed by hidden springs. Possessed by a sudden desire, I knelt down and parted the tall grass. Wonder and delight swept over me. There on the damp ground lay the

loveliest little ground violets. Blue, instead of purple, they seemed like delicate bits of fragile china hid away and protected by the tall, strong blades of grass. But how had they caught the blue of the sky that arched overhead? And who had placed them there in all their beauty away from mortal sight? God, of course. And here I was intruding upon their privacy. And yet, perhaps they were meant for me to see.

I PICKED ONE and held it tenderly in the palm of my hand, feeling its velvet petals with my fingers. My heart was almost bursting with unnamed feelings. This lovely bit of God's handiwork spoke to me like a voice from heaven. It told me of God's care for the flower of the field. It showed me the perfection of everything made by His hand. It seemed to say that I had been chosen for a special blessing. My heart thrilled with the joy and wonder of it.

Gently I laid the tiny violet back on the damp ground. Reluctantly I dragged my feet back to the cabin, carrying the few wild flowers I had picked for the dinner table...

THERE IT WAS—this bit of heaven hid away in my heart under the debris of humdrum living and too easily hurt feelings. When all life should have been joyous, here remained one small rapturous moment finally come to light.

I had cherished it so much at the time, I had never told any one. Now on my sick-bed I was living it again in all its reality and vividness. Now I knew the meaning of it and was ready to share it with others.

Who can say, whatever disenchantment follows, that we ever forget magic, or that we can ever betray, on this leaden earth, the apple-tree, the singing and the gold?

— Thomas Wolfe

IDEALS AND STRUGGLE

Carla Patsuris

MAN OFTEN BELIEVES he is defeated. It may seem he faces a wall with no way to turn and that whichever way he looks it is but to face into other walls. But traps and trials are testing places for character and mind strengthening. It is in the dark so often that the idea for freedom is conceived.

Nothing in the world is an end unto itself, but rather a means to a further development and every kind of crucifixion can bring about an inner revelation. Any crucifixion is a conflict with matter whether it be in circumstances or duties, takings or offerings, or all that influences the growth of character. As long as a man struggles and is limited and bound by restrictions, he is imprisoned. When he conquers, his victory over failure is a glorified freedom.

YET ALWAYS there must be a goal. Man can have no sense of becoming, cannot evolve toward something if the goal is not there. Ideas cannot be bought: they are of spirit and desire. It is only their poor counterfeits that can be bartered. The reason why an ideal is such a precious jewel is because as one works toward it *one enters a revelation of all the truth that the ideal embodies.*

Temporary setbacks, humiliations, even despairs, are but the garden ground for further ideals and ideas. Faith in one self and in one's own actions brings about the flash of light, the rare moment, the unforgettable beauty that is a transfiguration: the reward of effort and struggle and faithful patience.

MAN FELL from divine perfection by deciding to follow his own miserable, shortsighted will instead of the Will of the power that created him. In doing this, he lost his will power, lost his sense of godhood. Regeneration can come by striving with all his mind and heart to escape the narrow vision of a mere man: trying to comprehend the Will of the power that drives him, and to turn his own will into that greater Will....

The only purpose of knowledge is to BE MORE. A point comes where a man can use words brilliantly, but cannot CHANGE HIMSELF. Knowledge, like art, has only one purpose: to show man his own face.

— Colin Wilson
in RELIGION AND THE REBEL

THE DECLINE OF RELIGION

WHAT IS CHIEFLY sapping the efficacy of religion today? The brief answer seems to be that, insofar as religion depends upon a belief in other-worldly realities, it has ceased to carry conviction or to invoke a sense of reality. It has lost its grip on the intellect. People acknowledge the validity of Christian ethics; but they try to harness them to a Religion of Man, because they no longer believe in any higher power. The reason for this is that science has entirely changed our outlook on the universe and our views about the origin and nature of man.

The background of thought is totally different from what it was when Christian dogmas were formulated, and the meaning of dogmas depends on the nature of the background. A proposition in any age has to be interpreted in terms of the prevailing background of thought....

SINCE THOSE FAR-OFF DAYS, our minds have been imbued with the idea of the ubiquity and efficacy of the forces of nature. It has discovered the vastness of space and the minuteness of our little planet, shown causal law at work on every hand, traced our emergence from the brutes, and displaced man and his world from the central position which he once fancied they occupied. Thus, the whole perspective is different from what it was when the universe was thought to center about one human and divine family.

A proposition which seemed to be almost literally true in the earlier epoch recedes into a region of myth in the later. Psychologists now speak of the other-worldly hopes and beliefs of religion as projections from the mind of man made when it was passing through its earlier stages of development—myths which have served their usefulness and are now outworn.

YET, the protagonists of Christianity continue to state their religion in terms of the mental background which was universal when Christianity began.

— G. N. M. Tyrrell
In THE PERSONALITY OF MAN

SOWING AND REAPING

HAVING BEEN a sickly child, I was unable to do many things my sister did with ease, and all extra activity was not for me. I would ask the question WHY? My mother, who to me was a saint, and to those who knew her, a good Christian woman, was destroyed by a combination of typhoid and tuberculosis, at the age of 31. Why?

Since we were given to understand by the teachings of Jesus that we, ourselves, were responsible for our acts, and must pay for our mistakes, how can we conscientiously say another is responsible for our weak bodies and minds?

I have studied the Bible and several religious movements, also much of the literature on the different religions, past and present, attended lectures and found them based on the same theory, God-the-Father, overall, and the Son, in our time, Jesus. We are supposed to work our way up the ladder of life, back to our Father, from whom we came, by learning the lessons of earth life, and in paying for our sins. But I found no direct answer to my WHY.

THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION I received the following thoughts: — Mankind evolves, or reincarnates. There seems to be a constant evolving, a period of earth life, a period of life beyond this world, a period on earth, and so on, until we have learned all the lessons of earth life. We must learn the lessons the highway of darkness can teach, as well as the lessons learned on the highroads of life; the highways of hard strenuous toil, and the pathway of plenty. I also believe we will walk the pathways of the black man, brown man, red man, yellow man, and the white man, not necessarily in that order, for the ways of the different races are not the same. I believe we must know all the trials and temptations of each race of mankind, before we become so pure, that when we make our transition from the earth plane, we do not return, unless as a great leader or teacher.

So I firmly believe, we truly have nothing we do not earn, weak body, weak mind, spastic condition or whatever...

— Zeoria G. Stirrett

(A letter to FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER)

LESSON IN STONE

Zelma Dennis

ONE OF THE MOST revealing sources of joy and inspiration is found in humble places, often appearing in the common things of everyday life, yet having the radiance of true worth.

Once I had a wonderful visit with an old friend who for many years has been cultivating his hobby of rock collecting and beautifying. He demonstrated the complete operation from the initial rock gathered from various places to the final polished jewel. His rocks were, strangely, fragments of stars (meteorites) or of trees which, through the mysterious alchemy of the passage of eons, had been transformed to stone. Even the bone of a dinosaur had been polished to reveal its mystery and unlock the secret of Time.

The process of transforming the lumps of granite or semi-precious rock fascinated me. He put them through a series of refining drums of gritty substance which ground off the accumulation of matter collected for centuries. As I watched these drums grinding and turning, I thought about human lives and of how God grinds them, in an ever-finer process, to remove from our souls the accumulated encrustations of years of doubt, disbelief, envy, greed, hatred, and all other negative attitudes which cover up the core of our inner beauty. I thought of Him as the Divine artisan seeking to make earthly beings into glowing souls.

MY FRIEND, after removing the stones from the grinding mills, took and cut, shaped and buffed them on a special emery wheel until each rough fragment of the earth became gem-like in appearance. All of the hidden facets of light gleamed and shone. To me they were more beautiful than rare precious ornaments because they were the humble pieces that composed the mountains, deserts and seas. In a common stone, the integral part of our world, what wisdom and truth was resplendent, giving deeper insight and new inspiration for daily living.

I THOUGHT HOW BEAUTIFUL we must be to God when we are polished and shining with the Christ light of love. We too are a part of this earth, often like many stones that are trodden upon, and unnoticed, until the hand of the Master has worked with care and seasoned in an atmosphere of love where truth and beauty are unfolded.

WHY FAR AWAY

MANY DO NOT CARE for God. The longing for a higher ideal has not awakened in them. Again, there are many who follow the traditional way of religious practices in order to be religious; they follow prescribed form of worship, undergo much asceticism and hardship, but they have no clear idea as to what they see. Some become 'religious' in order to be happy after death: they have suffered much in the present life, and they do not want the repetition of the same thing in the life to come, if there is such a life at all. In order to avoid suffering in a future life, they go to church, worship in temples, perform fasts and prayers. Some are more gross in their religious ideals. They pray and perform religious practices in order to get some earthly end—worldly prosperity, health for themselves or for some near relatives.

Such being the case, God is far away from even those who pass as religious persons, those who are outwardly religious. It seems so very tragic, that people undergo so much hard labour in order to build up their spiritual life, nevertheless they do not make much progress; the realisation of God which is the only aim of a religious life, is far, far away from them in spite of all their religious disciplines.

STILL, IF WE LOOK into the scriptures, it appears that the realisation of God is not very difficult. "Ask and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you"—these are the words of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible. The words are clear, unequivocal—there is no mistaking about the sense of the statement. But yet, of the innumerable persons who are earnest about their religious life, how many can say that they have got the direct vision of God, that God is as much alive to them as is any living being? With most men God is simply a name—a word; nothing more than that. He does not enter into their inner life.

It is true, if you seek God you will find Him, if you ask for the vision of God you will be vouchsafed that, if you knock at the door of God, the kind Father will open the door to you. But the thing is, many devotees do not seek God directly; they have not the courage to think that they will realise God and that they have a claim to that. They have a timid view of the religious life—they are not bold enough to storm the citadel of God. Sometime, they start with the thought that they will realise God, but they lie down on the way in their great journey, and console themselves with the thought that God will be realised in some distant future. Has not the scripture said, one should be persevering, if

God is not realised, even through hundreds of lives? They are, however, satisfied with the thought that realisation of God can wait for hundreds of lives, but they do not become persevering according to the direction of the scriptures. Their contentment is simply a cloak for their inertia, idleness and lukewarm feelings.

If God is a loving father, He must be impartial. It cannot be that God was kind to a devotee thousands of years ago in the remote past and since then He has closed His doors to all mankind. If God was realised in the deserts of Arabia or in the wilderness of Palestine, He can be realised even now—this very moment. Every devotee has a claim upon the love of God; what is needed is that he should assert his birthright. If you, the heir to a rich father, walk about like a wretched beggar, who can help it?

BELIEVE that the realisation of God is possible, and you will have it. Much depends on self-confidence. Faith in oneself is absolutely necessary for success in earthly life; it is equally necessary in religious life. If you want religion, ask for the direct vision of God; long for the living presence of God; don't be satisfied with anything short of that. Because you are so easily satisfied, God plays tricks with you.—He is far away from you. If God be all—pervading, God is present at the very spot where you are ignoring God.

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS and prophets are simply examples before us. Their words and sayings are true, very true. Because you do not pay sufficient attention to them, because you do not ponder deeply over their meanings, you do not reap the full measure of benefit from their examples. But know it for certain, the value of religious life is nil if you do not realise God, if you cannot feel His presence as a living entity. If you know that, you will pant for the vision of God just as a child longs for his home when overtaken by night in an out-of-the-way place. And once you have that kind of hankering, God will no longer be so remote from you. When you are seized with that earnestness, in a trice you will realise God. God has put on a mask over His face. At any time He can put it off.

SO BE BOLD in your desire, firm in your resolve and sincere in your hankering. If there comes a time, in your life, when it is impossible for you to live without the realisation of God, God will no longer be far away. So long as you are satisfied with anything other than God, God will not be perceived by you. God is a jealous Being. One cannot serve God and the world together. Here the word 'world' means anything other than God. So giving up every other thing, seek Him and Him only. And you are sure to reach the goal.

— *Anonymous*
(In PRABUDDHA BHARATA)

BOOKS THAT NEVER GROW OLD

Peter V. K. Funk

In the area of religion you find superb books that never grow old and that speak out to each generation with the same relevancy, bringing fresh and exciting insights. From time to time, we believe that it might be interesting and of value to discuss some of these books in FIP. Quite likely you will know some that are mentioned and it may remind you to return to them again. Or if you have not read a particular book you may be stimulated to do so.

Possibly one of the most enduring and endearing of all religious classics is THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD, by Brother Lawrence. This slender volume is composed of "four conversations had with and fifteen letters written by Nicholas Herman, of Lorraine, a lowly and unlearned man, who, after having been a footman and soldier, was admitted a Lay brother among the barefooted Carmelites at Paris in 1666 and was afterwards known as Brother Lawrence."

Diligently Brother Lawrence followed the usual proscribed methods of prayer, meditation and contemplation. Throughout the rest of the day, however, he applied his mind carefully, even in the midst of his business, to the presence of God.

Actually what he did was so utterly simple—so completely natural and within reach of all of us. He merely carried on a continuous conversation with God. No theological difficulties or doctrinal dilemmas for him. They did not exist. God was a reality and his one objective was to be in constant contact with Him.

When an occasion of practicing some virtue offered, he addressed himself to God, saying, *"Lord, I cannot do this unless Thou enablest me,"* and then he received more than sufficient strength.

When he had failed in his duty, he only confessed his fault, saying to God, *"I shall never do otherwise if You leave me to myself. It is You who must hinder my failing and mend what is amiss."* After this he gave himself no further uneasiness about it.

It did not matter where he was or what he was doing. It was all the same to him. *"The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer and in the noise and clutter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament."*

Personally, I have always preferred Brother Lawrence to almost any other religious book I have read. So often in a business conference when problems present themselves, I find myself quietly asking for guidance. When children are being difficult and it looks as though the entire day may be falling apart, conversing with God within myself is more than merely a comfort—it provides me with direction and strength. When I am angry, His presence tempers me—when I am joyful, even more joy is added. When I awake at night disturbed over certain events, I am able to go to sleep quickly again.

Yet, there should be sounded a note of warning. The technique, by its very simplicity, can be deceptive to the unwary. Thomas Powers has quite rightly pointed out that as simple as it seems and as available as it is to all of us, very few are able to keep it up with any degree of consistency. We embark on this great adventure with enthusiasms and expectations, knowing that it is the short cut we have been looking for. And then sometime later, to our enormous amazement, we suddenly discover that we have not been doing it for a long time.

We begin again, this time resolved to continue it for the rest of our lives. It is so simple—so easy to do. There is no ritual, no complicated formula to remember. And then—and then, somehow the resolve seems to have been gently washed away again without our ever having been actually aware of it. We must remember, however, that Brother Lawrence undoubtedly worked mightily to maintain the presence of God, for he had dedicated his life completely to Him—without reservation or restraint.

I cannot help but think of a friend of mine who committed suicide just a few weeks ago. He had built a highly successful public relations firm, was a good athlete, a splendid companion with a quick wit and in his own way a war hero. But somewhere along the way he became lost. There must have been a terrible hollowness and uncertainty to his life. Had he approached God with the simplicity, the faith, and the humbleness of Brother Lawrence, he never would have thrown away the precious gift of life.

The introduction to the book tells us that "his practice requires neither time, nor talents, nor training. At any moment, in the midst of any occupation, under any circumstances, the soul that wants to know God can practice the presence and can come to the knowledge. The Lord Christ of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge, let the *seemings* be what they may."

NOTICES and COMMENTS

MIDWESTERN ADVISOR. The Reverend Henry J. Gernhardt, Methodist minister of Twin Falls, Idaho, has graciously consented to act as an FIP Advisor in his area of the country. Reverend Gernhardt is engaged in promoting the practice of prayer in every possible way and has been occupied with this aspect of his ministerial work for most of his life. He writes: "Prayer was the means of an awakening which changed the course of my life and opened the way to the call to the ministry. For the past forty-seven years prayer has been the medium of providential guidance... Prayer and the Spiritual Life have been my supreme interests and activities throughout my ministry. The vital unity of denominations, and of the religions of the world, has its rootage in this mighty reality. I endorse enthusiastically the ideas and ideals of Fellowship in Prayer."

PRAYER GROUP. A recently organized World Prayer Circle invites participation from all who feel that a concerted world prayer effort is the only power that can forestall eventual war. Their letter to us states: "...We have succeeded in organizing prayer groups all over the world, praying for God's kind of Peace. We have organized an army of men and women of good-will. Millions of people from all religions are being recruited. This is the largest army ever mobilized...We must put prayer in orbit by setting in motion a prayer current continuously encircling the earth and so playing its part in weaving a planetary aura of protection. We must pray without ceasing and try to get others to do the same..." For further information about the World Prayer Circle please write to SYNTHESIS, 11881 Lampson Avenue, Garden Grove, California.

FIP NOTES. In the last few months many additional books have been donated to our growing library, and one donor has contributed funds towards its consolidation. We are deeply grateful and appreciative for all the help that has been provided us in this latest aspect of our overall program for the fostering of spiritual thought and the practice of prayer....On April 8 we sent a letter to all our subscribers asking each one to try to interest some new person in our work. The response to this letter was most gratifying and we wish to thank all who gave such understanding and prompt attention to our message. A number of letters, however, were returned undelivered, which was due in many cases to an individual's having changed his residence and neglected to provide a forwarding address. We urge all our readers to keep in touch with us if you wish to receive FELLOW-

SHIP IN PRAYER regularly, especially to keep us informed of any change of address.

CONTRIBUTORS. Last August we printed Charles Cox's first piece in FIP, *From Darkness to Light,* which was warmly received. It is good to have him with us again. His *Endurance in Spiritual Life,* on page 18, is written with the same meditative eloquence that distinguished his first selection and, like its predecessor, was drawn, with Mr. Cox's permission, from a long letter he sent to us recently...In our April issue we noted Marion Mill Preminger's acceptance of our invitation to become an FIP Advisor and in this number we are happy to reprint an article she wrote in response to inquiries about her long and intimate association with Dr. Albert Schweitzer in his African work. Mrs. Preminger's article, beginning on page 6, splendidly captures both the humanity of Dr. Schweitzer and the saintly spirit that has gained the admiration of the world and set a model for many to emulate...We are gratified to print the work of two writers new to our pages: Mrs. Zeoria G. Stirrett of Long Beach, California, and Mr. John H. Armbruster, of St. Louis. Mrs. Stirrett's *Sowing and Reaping* on page 28 is another selection taken from an unusually interesting letter which we thought our readers should share with us. It was Mrs. Stirrett's response to a question we asked her on the subject of cause and effect. We plan to include a regular article from her in our next number... Mr. Armbruster's nostalgic and recollective *A Debt We Owe to Poets,* on page 10, should be pleasing to many...The suggestive, epistolary tone of Genevieve Burnell's *Spiritual Maxims,* on page 16, is natural in view of their having been included in letters to one of our readers, who gave us permission to print portions, which we were happy to do. These excerpts are printed separately in booklets published by the Burnell Library of Religious Research, 616 So. Santa Anita Ave., Arcadia, California...The moving, anonymously written *Why Far Away,* on page 30, originally appeared in the pages of the non-denominational monthly PRABUDDHA BHARATA (Awakened India), which is one of the world's great religious publications, located at 4 Wellington Lane, Calcutta 13, India.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES. FIP is published six times a year at the rate of $3.00. Special rates are available for additional copies. Certain back issues are available for free distribution.

FELLOWSHIP ADVISORS

EASTERN ZONE: Elisabeth Achelis, Mrs. W. T. Breckenridge, Florence S. Dustin, Mrs. Bennie Caroline Hall, Mrs. William Hung, Mrs. David William Jones, Olga Lamkert, Georgia H. Marin, Mrs. Kenneth B. Park.

SOUTHERN ZONE: Mrs. Arthur R. Kutch.

CENTRAL ZONE: Katherine L. Beech, Karl W. Frey, Mrs. David William Harris, Harry Halsey Starrett.

WESTERN ZONE: Mrs. Zelma S. Dennis, Henry J. Gernhardt, Roy Wallace Thomas, Mrs. J. H. Titus, Mrs. Helen Dudley Young.

FOREIGN ZONE: Prof. Mohammed F. M. Awad, Ph. D. *(Cairo, Egypt)*, Emilie, Lady Coote *(England)*, Prof. A. N. Molina *(Philippines)*, S. R. Shafaq *(Iran)*, and Dr. Teh-yao Wu *(Taiwan)*.

ADVISOR-AT-LARGE: Mrs. Marion Mill Preminger.

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Mildred Long
Francis Merchant
Carla Patsuris
Swami Ritajananda
Roy Wallace Thomas
Harry Halsey Starrett
W. J. Thompson

TRUSTEES *and* OFFICERS

William Hung, *President;* Mrs. Thomas M. Taylor, *Vice-President;* Gordon Belding, *Vice-President;* Frederic Snyder, *Vice-President;* Peter Van Keuren Funk, *Trustee;* Edwiene Schmitt, *Trustee;* J. E. Thompson, *Treasurer;* Kathryn G. Brown, *Executive Secretary;* Paul Hourihan, *Editor.*

Fellowship in Prayer
22 East 29th Street
New York 16, N. Y.

Date.....

I enclose $....in payment of a subscription to FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER for.....year (s), and $....toward furthering the work. May God add His blessing!

NAME.....

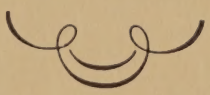
ADDRESS.....

CITY.....Zone.....STATE.....

FORGIVENESS

I MUST PRACTICE unlimited forgiveness because, if I did not, I should be wanting in veracity to myself, for it would be acting as if I myself were not guilty in the same way as the other has been guilty towards me. Because my life is so liberally spotted with falsehood, I must forgive falsehood which has been practiced upon me; because I myself have been in so many cases wanting in love, and guilty of hatred, slander, deceit, or arrogance, I must pardon any want of love, and all hatred, slander, deceit, or arrogance which have been directed against myself. I must forgive quietly and without drawing attention to it; in fact I do not really pardon at all, for I do not let things develop to any such act of judgment.

— Albert Schweitzer



Fellowship in Prayer
22 East 29th Street
New York 16, N. Y.